



General Assembly

Official Records

Disarmament Commission

266th meeting

Thursday, 21 July 2005, 3 p.m.

New York

Chairman: Mr. Rowe (Sierra Leone)

The meeting resumed at 3.20 p.m.

The Chairman: Good afternoon. Unfortunately, a few more consultations are going on, and we are unable to resume the meeting as planned. So, with the permission of members, we should like to have a few more minutes of recess while those consultations continue. I am announcing this out of courtesy; I do not want people just hanging around, not knowing what is happening. Please bear with us, and we will resume the meeting in no more than 20 minutes' time.

The meeting was suspended at 3.22 p.m. and resumed at 4.25 p.m.

The Chairman: I am sorry. I had intended to give members a short recess, but it was prolonged for reasons beyond my control.

At this stage, after consulting with a number of delegations, I thought I should announce that we should suspend the meeting until tomorrow afternoon, unfortunately, while we await word from capitals that are still looking into the draft report, the package, that we have now. When I was thinking of having a meeting in the morning, I wanted to set a deadline. However, I must be realistic and forego that opportunity in order to adjust to what I do not want to call "bureaucracy", but this is a fact of life that we all have to face: we are all delegates reporting to greater powers.

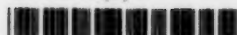
So, if there is no objection, I propose that we meet tomorrow at 3 p.m. in order to, we hope, adopt the draft report.

Mr. Laki (Uganda): I must express my delegation's regret. If we have to conduct ourselves like this, do we need to be told that we could make better use of time? Here we are — we suspended the meeting yesterday morning and we had the whole afternoon and this morning, and here we come, and some delegations — we do not know which — still have to get in touch with their capitals. I think we could do better the next time. I very much regret that we have not used our time very profitably.

Mr. Carriedo (Spain): I would like to say that I agree with what was said by the representative of Uganda. I think it is really regrettable that we are not ready, at this stage, to agree on the report. I would kindly like to ask, through the Chairman, what is the current status? I am absolutely lost in that regard at the moment. Could the Chairman please elaborate further as to what the procedural problem is?

The Chairman: There is no procedural problem. As I said, according to the information I am getting, capitals are still discussing the package. It is not a procedural problem. I think it is a question of the various arms of Government and the fact that the recommendations that we arrive at here have to go through at least political processes — and I would hope not legislative ones. There is no procedural problem. But I share the concern of the representative of Spain. I hope that the spirit of conciliation and the apparent success that we have achieved will serve to inspire us to be a little patient.

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I can tell the Commission that, in my experience in this house, this is not unusual. I am not saying that is an excuse for us to prolong things indefinitely, but it is part of multilateral diplomacy. I have been here for some time, and I know these things do happen. Just recently, I was telling some friends that during the thirty-ninth session, we went through the same situation for a period of weeks — not days, but weeks — with regard to the issue of international economic cooperation, and finally, we got through. I hope that we will get through tomorrow, which is why I scheduled the meeting for the afternoon instead of the morning.

Mr. Najafi (Islamic Republic of Iran): While we share the concern of the previous speaker, we can go along with the Chairman's ruling to return tomorrow afternoon.

I would just like to emphasize one point. The package we agreed yesterday is just that, a package. I am sure that all of us who needed instructions from capitals have sent for them. Some may perhaps be waiting. But if we schedule the meeting for tomorrow afternoon, then if there is any kind of new development we might lose what we have achieved. So I wonder whether it is possible to have the meeting tomorrow morning or not. Tomorrow afternoon, if there is any kind of new developments I am afraid we will lose everything. I am just concerned that we make the best use of the momentum we have created during the consultations.

Mr. Omura (Japan): My delegation shares the concern just expressed by the representative of Iran. It is not at all my intention to prolong this sort of discussion. However, I would like to seek clarification from the Chairman on one point. In case we are unable to reach consensus by tomorrow afternoon, should we be prepared for further discussions next week, or should we stop our deliberations regardless of whether or not we are able to reach consensus by tomorrow afternoon?

Ms. Paterson (United Kingdom): I think we have heard several feelings of concern expressed around the room. But the Chairman has led us well thus far, and I think that he can assume that he has the European Union's support to hold the meeting when he thinks it wise to hold it. We recognize the realities on the ground. What we want to do is to come up with an agreement that we can all live with.

Mr. Litavrin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to associate myself with the views that have just been expressed, which I support. The only point I would like to make is that, if possible, we should now have a clearer picture of what the problem is, given that yesterday we were told that one or two delegations were waiting for a reply. The other issue pertains to the fact that work is taking place in many capitals to provide responses. I would be grateful if we could be provided with the reason for these delays. That would facilitate our work.

The Chairman: Some of the sentiments expressed by the representatives of Iran and Spain, among others, concerned the question of "What if?". But I did not get strong assurances that things are going to change. But what I am now doing is just to be optimistic. That is why I proposed having our meeting in the afternoon instead of in the morning, in order to give the people involved in negotiations with capitals time to come up with something so that we can move forward. I cannot anticipate something going wrong. I cannot anticipate the possibility of our meeting beyond tomorrow afternoon. I am optimistic, but I cannot give the Commission any guarantees.

So let us base our hopes on this optimism that we will take a decision on this package by tomorrow afternoon. And I emphasize, on members' behalf, that this is now a package. I said earlier that my strategy was to deal with these issues incrementally, for obvious reasons. We did so, and now we have a package. The package is on the table, and we hope that it will be adopted by consensus tomorrow afternoon.

Mr. Li Song (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation supports your decision, Mr. Chairman. We are willing to work together with other delegations and to exercise enough patience to wait until tomorrow afternoon's meeting. We will maintain our optimism, and we look forward to a good outcome.

At the same time, we note that, as you just emphasized, we have already waited since yesterday, and now, because of the meeting's postponement, we will wait until tomorrow afternoon, all to ensure that we achieve a clear result. Therefore, in order to save resources and ensure that our work is effective, I suggest that we start tomorrow's meeting promptly at 3 p.m. and keep it relatively short so that we can reach a good result that everyone can look forward to. And

since tomorrow is Friday and no one wants to wait here from 3 p.m. until 6 p.m., I suggest that we start the meeting at 3 p.m. sharp, have a very short meeting and finish our business promptly.

The Chairman: Let me put it this way: the delegations concerned have heard the sentiments expressed by the representative of China. I hope that the message is clear: we will start the meeting tomorrow at 3 p.m. sharp, and we expect that all the efforts we have made and the difficult hurdles that we have removed will finally bring us to the point where we are in a position to adopt the package that we have worked so hard on. As I said, the message is clear to the delegations concerned, which are I believe are present here. If they are not, I will transmit the sentiments and concerns expressed by the representative of China to the delegations concerned, which approached me and requested the postponement of our decision-making.

My attention has been drawn to the draft report, which delegates already have. I refer to paragraph 8, under section II. I intend to move paragraph 8 to come after paragraph 11, under section IV, "Conclusions and recommendations". Once again, I intend to move paragraph 8, under section II, to follow paragraph 11, under section IV. In addition, we will make a slight amendment to the paragraph, replacing the word

"these" with the phrase "the following". Thus, the paragraph will read,

"On 20 July, at the same meeting," — we will probably change the date — "the Commission agreed that the following two agenda items be included ..."

We will then specify them as (a) and (b), and their contents will be what now appears in the annex as the Chairman's proposal. In other words, we will dispense with the Chairman's proposal — they are no longer the Chair's proposal. So we will take what is now 1 and 2 in the Chairman's proposal and bring them as (a) and (b) to what is now paragraph 8, which will become paragraph 11 bis, or probably 12, when we adjust the numbering. I repeat: in paragraph 8, we will delete the word "these" and replace it with the phrase "the following"; we will move paragraph 8 to after paragraph 11, under section IV; and (a) and (b) will consist of what is now the Chairman's proposal in the annex. There will be no annex, so what is now the Chairman's proposal will become part of the body of the report.

With that clarification, I shall once again suspend the meeting until tomorrow at 3 p.m. sharp.

The meeting was suspended at 4.50 p.m.